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Monsoon Report (2)

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

The slow progress of the monsoon and its poor performance during the first quarter of the monsoon season (June-September) is causing serious concern among farmers as well as to the government. The window of opportunity for planting most kharif crops (rice, coarse grains, soybeans, peanut, cotton, and pulses) will be over by mid-July. If rains come in the next week, planting operations will pick up. Otherwise the country could be heading for a severe drought.

General Information:

After its earlier than normal arrival, progress of the monsoon has been very slow with most parts of central, north, and north western India yet to receive rains. Normally, the monsoon should have covered almost the entire country by now (Figure 1). Since the beginning of the

monsoon season on June 1, rains have been consistently below normal in almost all parts of the country with the deficiency widening with each passing week (See Figure 2 & 3).

For the week ending June 24, only 5 (which include the agriculturally unimportant Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands) of the 36 weather subdivisions received normal or above normal rainfall. The week's rainfall deficiency was 68 percent, with most parts of central, north and northwest India receiving very little or no rains. Cumulative rainfall during June 1 to June 24 was 54 percent below normal, with only 8 weather subdivisions receiving normal or above normal rainfall, compared with 27 during the corresponding period of last year.

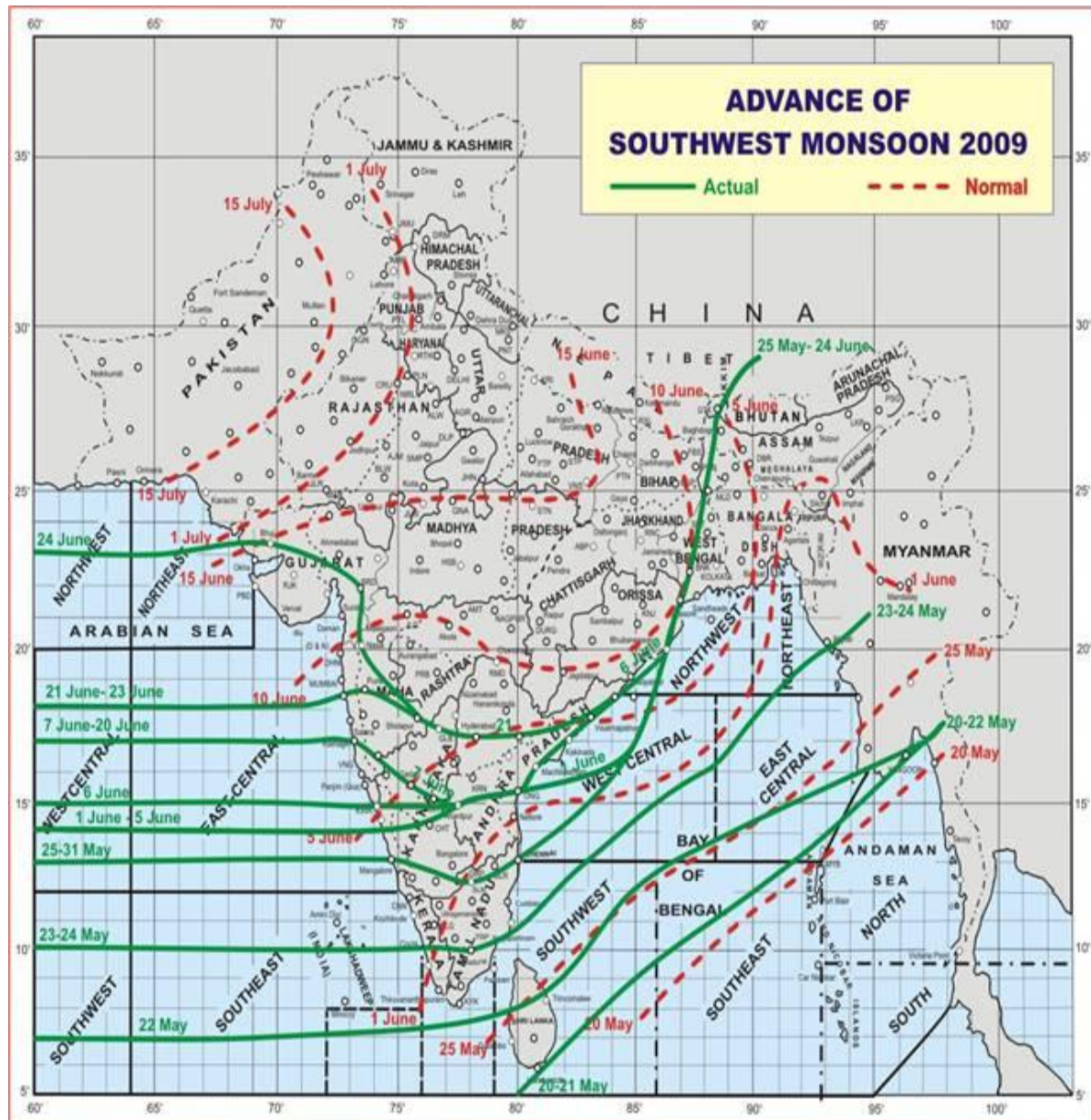
The slow progress of the monsoon and its poor performance during the first quarter of the monsoon season (June-September) is causing serious concerns among farmers as well as to the government. The revised monsoon forecast by the Indian Meteorological Department predicts total rainfall during the current monsoon season at 93 percent of the Long Period Average (LPA) of 890 mm, with a forecast error of ± 4 percent (See: www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=49361), categorizing it as "below normal", a downward revision from the earlier forecast of 96 percent of the LPA. However, the July and August rains are predicted to be normal or above normal, providing some consolation to the government.

The window of opportunity for planting of most kharif crops (rice, coarse grains, soybeans, peanut, cotton, and pulses) will be over by mid-July. If rains come in the next one week, planting operations will pick up. Otherwise the country will be heading for a drought, which could be more serious than the 2002 drought, which resulted in significant crop losses.

In some major rice growing states such as West Bengal, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, the crop is mostly rainfed and dependent on monsoon rains. Although rice is mostly irrigated in the major surplus states of Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, the crop is still dependent on monsoon rains for replenishing ground water reserves and reservoirs required for irrigation and generating electricity to run tube wells. What is hurting the crop more this year is high surface temperatures (4 to 5 degree Celsius above normal) which is causing high evapo-transpiration. The lack of rains will also result in low fertilizer application, which also will have a negative impact on yields.

Coarse grain production (corn, sorghum, and millet), which are largely non-irrigated crops grown in north and central India, will also be severely affected if rains are further delayed. Other crops likely to be affected are soybeans grown mostly in Madhya Pradesh, peanut in Gujarat, cotton in Maharashtra and Gujarat, and pulse crops, all monsoon-dependent crops.

Figure 1: Progress of Monsoon 2009



Source: Indian Meteorological Department

Figure 2. Weekly Monsoon Performance 2009

[illegible]

[illegible]

Figure 3. Progressive Monsoon Performance 2009

[illegible]

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| South Interior Karnataka | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kerala | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lakshadweep | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 35 | 39 | 45 | 54 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Excess (>20%) | | | | | Deficient (-20% to -59%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Normal (+19% to -19%) | | | | | Scanty (-60% to -100%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |